

SANDALWOOD HARVEST — TRANSPORT REGULATIONS

681. Hon COLIN HOLT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to current sandalwood regulations.

- (1) Is the Forest Products Commission operating within the sandalwood transport regulations with the same conditions as private property and plantation harvesters?
- (2) If no to (1), can the minister please explain what transport regulations it is operating under?
- (3) If no to (1), can the minister please explain why it is not operating under these transport regulations?
- (4) Under the new biodiversity act and regulations, plantation sandalwood is now classified as “specifically controlled sandalwood”. Can the minister please explain why plantation sandalwood and operations are being regulated in the same way as wild sandalwood?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions must be notified before any native sandalwood is transported. Plantation harvesters need to give this notification only one business day before wood is transported, while other harvesters must provide three business days’ notice, providing more flexibility for the plantation sector. DBCA is liaising with the Forest Products Commission regarding the management of its contractors. Very similar arrangements are in place with respect to sandalwood transport requirements for FPC sandalwood contractors, and private property and plantation harvesters. Private property and plantation native sandalwood harvesters must complete the approved sandalwood tracking form, while FPC contractors are currently using the existing delivery note. This is an interim arrangement until an online system is implemented through which all harvesters will use the same form. Both forms require the same information to be recorded.
- (4) The overall scope of the sandalwood licensing regime being given effect to under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 is consistent with the 2016 native sandalwood industry strategy for Western Australia, which in turn is consistent with the findings of the 2014 parliamentary inquiry into the sandalwood industry. This licensing regime assists in ensuring that any native sandalwood supplied, processed or sold in or exported from Western Australia has been legally sourced. Having a licensing regime that demonstrates a complete chain of custody from source to export meets international market demands for authenticated, traceable supplies of WA sandalwood, benefiting both plantation and native sectors of the industry. Ensuring that plantation native sandalwood is required to comply with the same licensing requirements of the BC act and regulations safeguards against illegally harvested wild sandalwood being sold on the open market.